THINGS I REMEMBER

Marcus M. Aldrich

1904

(Albeeville)

Given to the Mendon Historical Society
in 1974 by Florence J. Aldrich of Mendon

THINGS I REMEMBER Marcus M. Aldrich 1904

Albeeville

Aldrich birthplace	page 2
Schoolhouse	pages 3, 23, 25
Arnold Taft place	pages 10, 32-34
Bootshop	page 23
Indian wigwam	pages 29,30

Also notes on Albeeville, bootshop, Arnold Taft place, Little Pond, Inman Hill, Dance Hall, from Bertha Albee S. Gaskill to Florence J. Aldrich at back of book.

Albeeville was the Seventh School District of Mendon. "Horse Corner"-"formally decreed, for every man was the owner of a noble and dashing steed,"-from poem by Marcus M. Aldrich. Royal Wheelock lived in Albeeville and kept and traded horses there--the section was also known as "Horse Corner". Wheelock moved to the center of town in 1871 to the house across from the Unitarian Church on Maple Street.....notes by F. J. A.

Family names in Albeeville

1831 map-Wheelock, Taft, Staples, Legg, Aldrich, Fletcher, Hayward
1857 map-Wheelock, Taft Staples, Freeman, Albee
1870 map-Wheelock, Fletcher, Howard, Cunningham, Freeman, Staples, Mellen, Ross, Morris, Taft, Southwick
1898 map-Gaskill, Freeman, Holbrook, Brown, Gunn, Warner

EJC/1978

Of The News Staff

MENDON — Back when a man could own a large spread of land, including houses, barns, machinery and a business, and he paid an annual tax bill of $28.23, there flourished a lively section of Mendon called Albeeville.

Much of Albeeville remains today. The section was the subject of the Mendon Historical Society's fall meeting recently at the First Parish Church.

Albeeville was also known as "Horse Corner" because "every man was an owner of a noble and dashing steed," according to Marcus Aldrich, a resident of Albeeville who wrote his reminiscences in 1904.

Albeeville is the section of town on Millville Road that is crossed by Lovell and Pleasant Streets. It extends to Wigwam Hill and what is now occupied by the Southwick Animal Farm.

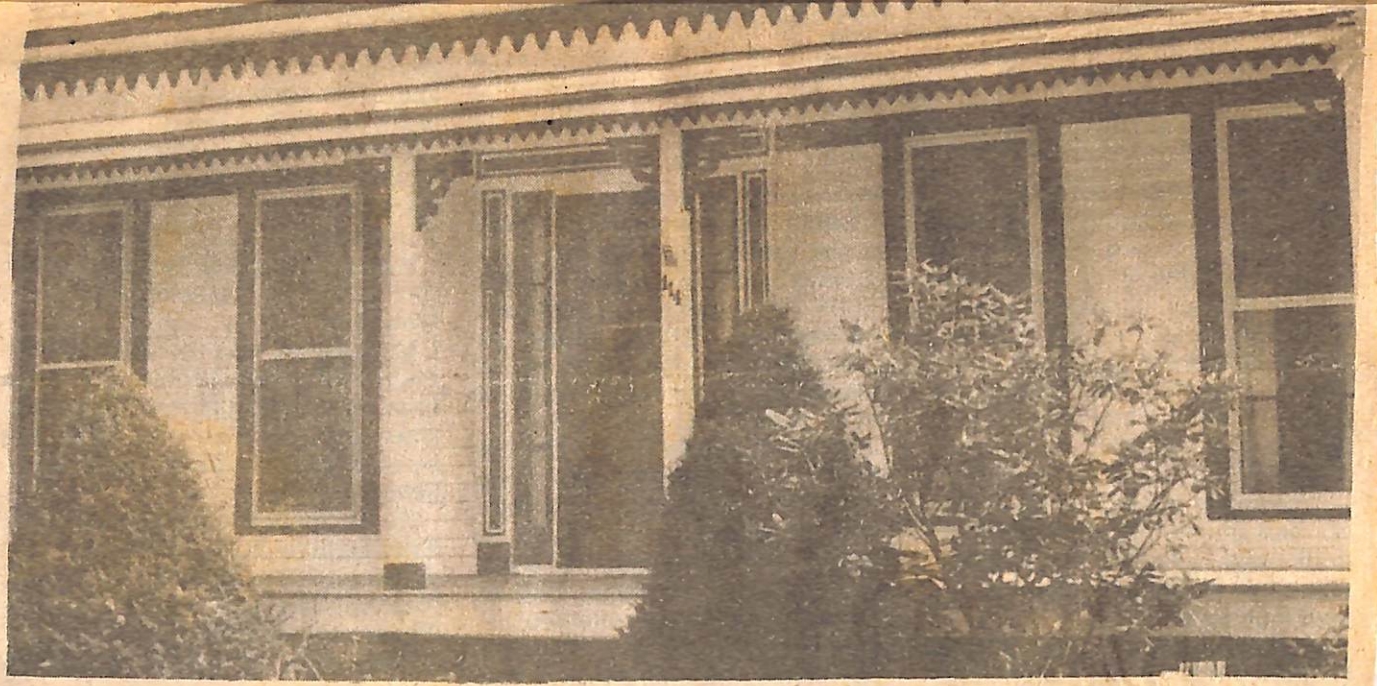
Two of the houses mentioned by Aldrich are still standing today. The former Arnold Taft home is a large rambling brick farmhouse now occupied by the Edward Lamothe family.

Enos

The former Enis Albee homestead, and the site of the Albee Boot Shop, is now the home of the Carl Wagners. Both homes are located on Millville Road.

As a young boy, Aldrich worked in the boot shop, first shown on town maps in 1857. He recalled Albee as an even tempered man whose workers took advantage of him, because of his even temperament.

Aldrich's reminiscences are joined by those of Bertha Albee Spalding Gaskill, Enis's granddaughter. When she was a child, Bertha wrote, her family was large and included male boarders. The family-owned boot business met with reversals and the family lost their home when she was 17 years old.



NAMESAKE — The Enis Albee homestead, from which the Albeeville section of Mendon derives its name, sits on Millville Road and is now the home of the Carl Wagners. (News Photo)

Aldrich first tasted dried herring at the Taft home and remembered the mother, Deborah, to be a stout woman with a graceful smile who never uttered cross words.

He was friendly with Arnold's son Henry who was adept on the bugle and would play it out in back of the brick house.

But, "our Henry was full of unrest and sailed to California in 1849." Henry became one of the 49ers, but came home "no richer than when he went," according to Aldrich.

Bertha Albee

She graduated from Mendon High School in 1890 although her family had moved back to Uxbridge where they had originally come from.

Reflecting on her childhood home, Bertha recalled the cranberry bogs and abundance of blueberries. She remembered the old Southwick Dance Hall where country dances were held on the second floor while oyster stews were served on the first floor.

notes taken from Things I Remember, read at October 1978 meeting of Mendon Historical Society

a copy under "Aldrich" also.

ALDRICH FAMILY A

Keep under "Albeeville"

THINGS I REMEMBER by Marcus M. Aldrich 1904
1834-1914

I was born May 20, 1834, in Mendon. This, of course, is not remembered but the fact is so well established in different ways (and especially by the Journal of Doctor Metcalf, the attending physician, who was in attendance - where he states I was born on above date at eleven P.M. and that I weighed nine pounds) I have no disposition to scruple it; and although I cannot recall the fact, I feel confident that I was present on the occasion and made myself heard.

It was not my good fortune to have so retentive a memory of early happenings as some other people seem to have but until I was about four years old there is but little that I remember worth the noting. There are a few glimmerings, however, previous to that time which can be mentioned; and among them a favorite dog. His color was between a red and a yellow and he was of the cur breed. My only brother, George, was nearly thirteen years older than myself and thus was not much of a playmate at any time of my childhood, and from this condition of things I was forced to resort to the companionship of "Old Dime" (Dimon was the dog's name) for a playfellow.

Like many another old family canine, Old Dime was a wonderful dog, and by his many acts that showed an intelligence almost human, he became a great favorite of the whole family. Woodchucks were very plenty on my father's farm and Dime seemed to understand that they were a detriment to successful farming and in the season of "chucks", as father used to call them, he was always on the alert for their capture; and I can well remember how, when the "chuck" was successful in getting into his hole, where Dime could

not reach him, he would come to the house for help, and exhibit the greatest excitement to have someone hurry off with him to his assistance; and when someone would start to go with him, his leaps and bounds and almost human expression of joy were unbounded.

According to my mother's statement, this dog at one time was the means of saving the writer's life. It was before I can remember but my mother used to tell me that the dog came to the house one day under great excitement and by his stirring manoevers showed that something unusual was the matter; and when she showed a disposition to give him attention, the dog led the way down, quite a distance from the house, to a swamp, where she found a small boy stuck fast in the mud and unable to extricate himself. Old Dime lived to the age of about fifteen years and died a natural death.

My father's name was Abel Aldrich; and being an ardent Democrat he named me Marcus Morton after Governor Morton, who was chosen governor of Massachusetts about the time of my birth. My mother's maiden name was Phoebe Comstock; and the home of these honored parents was at or near the base of Wigwam Hill in Mendon, Massachusetts - to the east, on what has been known as the Asa Fletcher place, then the Abel Aldrich place, and now (1904) as the Willis Southwick place. It is an out-of-the-way place but as I remember it in childhood it had many attractions, and especially in the time of apple blossoms and the gatherings of fruit and nuts. There was an abundance of nice fruit on the old homestead and it is with great delight that I remember the great round plumwaters, the bell-shaped gilleflowers, and the bright red sapsevines that almost make my mouth run water now to think of them. The golden pippins are also remembered with great relish for there was a very fine flavored variety that grew on the old place. There were greenings for pies, and pairmains for spring eating; and altogether the

fruit on my father's farm was greatly prized in my youth. We had huckleberries, blackberries, Dime ate; no walnuts, but there was an abundance of chestnuts that in the season of them could be gathered on frosty mornings, when the burrs would open and let the nuts drop to the ground. In speaking of the apple trees, I am reminded of the large number of partridges that used to come at the twilight, to feed upon the buds of these fruit trees, and how my brother George would sly around behind the walls, or perhaps build a booth of rails and brush into which he could waylay, and shoot the unsuspecting birds.

When I was about four years old, I remember that I was sent to school about a mile and a half away, in the old brick schoolhouse at what was then called Horse Corner (now Albeeville). It was my first venture in this direction and it is presumed that it was not wholly agreeable for I remember that I ran away for home and that when nearly there Alpha Freeman (m. Linas B. Staples) and Sally Staples (daughter of Abram), who had been sent after me by the teacher (Rachel Freeman, afterwards Mrs. Millens Wheelock), who was fearful I would not know the way home.

My first remembrance of helping on the farm was once when my father set me to planting white beans in the corn hills, as was his custom; and to expedite business I put quite a large quantity of them in a depression side of a rock and covered them up, little thinking that when they came up my wrongdoing would be discovered; but discovered it was-when the penalty had to be endured. Like other boys, and perhaps more so, I was prone to do many things contrary to the rule when having my own way was at stake, and, not having much relish for school, I one morning hid my best speller so as to get up an excuse for staying at home. It didn't work, however, for I was made to go just the same, and wear the old one, and when

getting home at night the new spenser had been found, where my folks very well knew I must have hid it - and the birch was again brought into play.

My father dying when I was but ten years old, I do not have so much remembrance of him as I could wish but there are some things that are quite vivid to my memory. When I was about four years old I thought it would be smart to do a little chopping at the woodpile, the result being that I split the ankle bone of one of my feet. This was a very bad cut and it was a long time before I fully recovered from it, and while in its most painful stages I remember of my father carrying me in his arms about the house to quiet me from my crying. Again, I remember of having very severe earaches that almost drove me wild with pain, and that on these occasions my father would carry me in his arms and blow tobacco smoke in my ears to sooth the pain, and to this day I always feel to sympathize with any one who is troubled in this way; the tobacco smoke, I think, was of some benefit. Another dire complaint of my childhood was a siege with boils, at two different times, there being as many as eight to ten at a time on different parts of my body, many of them being blood boils; and if Job was more afflicted than I was, he has my sympathy; and if he had extraordinary patience under such a trying ordeal, I am forced to the belief that under the circumstances he was just obliged to be patient or suffer greater consequences.

My mother had a brother Ezra who was blind, and although unable to see at all, he did a great many kinds of work such as reaping and thrashing grain, sawing wood, and bottoming chairs with flat or birch splints. He was also a great fisherman, going to the rivers and ponds all about to catch eels and hornpout. Uncle Ezra was a large jovial man, always full of good humor, and in my boyhood I was always greatly delighted to have him come to stay overnight and

let me sleep with him. He was one of those old-fashioned natural singers and he had a sweet melodious voice, and with his jolly songs and funny stories the whole household was kept in good cheer. I fail to recall those songs but the ending of one of them was "I must and will get married for the fit comes on me now".

The Dorr War occurred when I was about nine years old and I remember that Uncle James Howard of Woonsocket, Rhode Island (married a sister of my father) fled to my father's house for safety, bringing his gun along with him; and when he finally concluded it was safe for him to return home, he left his gun up in our garret, in an old-fashioned blue chest.

My father was prudential school committee and had the hiring of teachers to see to, and at one time when Gilbert Comstock (son of my mother's brother William) was teacher, my father came in to visit the school, and as he sat quite near me I felt it quite safe to cut up a few shines that I wouldn't have dared to risk had my father not been present, but to my great surprise and chagrin I soon found myself whisking around the schoolroom at a lively gait, in the hands of the teacher, and I have never been quite sure that my father did not give the teacher the wink.

My mother's father died when she was a young lady, leaving her mother with a large family of children, some of whom were quite small; and when I was a boy, and before my father died, my grandmother Comstock used to make ~~it~~ her home with my father and mother, her children then being all grown up and married, and I well remember her quiet and peaceful ways. She was an old-time Quaker and wore the old style Quaker caps and scoop bonnet, and although I don't remember of her attending the meetings to any extent, she always had a great regard for the Sabbath Day, when she would get

out her bible and other old-fashioned religious books and in her quiet and devoted manner read them to herself. She had her own room, which we always called Grandmother's Room, it being furnished with her own things, and on Sabbath Days, as she always spoke of the day, she usually kept to her own room, when I well remember how good and nice she used to look in her nice, clean, starched, white cap with a handkerchief-like cape that she wore over her shoulders.

My mother had a sister Olive, who married Millens Taft. They used to live on what is now the Blackstone poorfarm, and when I was a small boy I took great delight in going to see my Aunt Olive and her family of children - some older and some younger than myself. They had two neighbors, named Lyman and Willard Holbrook, and at one time when I was on a visit to my aunt a nest of red squirrels was found by some of the Holbrook family, the young ones being captured and brought to the house. At this I was greatly elated and with the assistance of my aunt's son, Willis, who was a little older than I was, I succeeded in securing two of the sprightly rodents to carry home with me. This was a grand acquirement for a small boy and I think there was no one experience of my early childhood that I was more delighted with than to be the owner of this very cunning pair of red squirrels. I bought a cage of someone (no remembrance who) for twenty-five cents, which had a sleeping apartment and quite a large-sized wire wheel for exercise, and when both of these squirrels would get into this wheel for a race, it was a beautiful sight to behold, but with the breaking up of my early home life, I was forced to to dispose of these-my first possessions and greatly prized friends.

THINGS I REMEMBER

My father was a sick man from my first recollection of him, his trouble being dispepsia, and November 25, 1844, I became a fatherless boy. I was but ten years old the previous May and of course did not fully realize the situation but I remember his last sickness, his sad and worn-out countenance, and when, not long before he died, he pressed me to his breast and kissed me. I vividly recall how rough and parched and seemingly lifeless were his lips. It was a sad experience to lose my father but my mother was a brave woman and I never lacked for succor. My father was a man of small means but the little he did have was disposed of in an honorable manner, for when he realized that his earthly race was near its end, he sent for a near neighbor, Arnold Taft, who was in the habit of writing legal paper; who, at the dictation of my father, wrote the words "I give and bequeath unto my lawful wife, Phebe Aldrich, all my estate, both real and personal, to be at her disposal"; and when Mr. Taft inquired of my father if he was not going to give anything to the boys, my father replied "I am going to give all to Phebe for I know if the boys use her well, she will save what she can for them"; and from this, and other evidences of my father's just principles, I have always taken great pride in the thought and belief that I was sired by a strictly honorable man.

My grandmother at this time had become an old woman, having been a widow for upwards of thirty years, and that Cupid's darts would produce any effect on her was the farthest from any one's anticipation, but the ways of the heart are sometimes astonishing and the parson was again called upon to tie the nuptial knot - Samuel Gaskill, who in those days was one of Mendon's wealthy men, had the misfortune to lose his wife, and, although an old man, was not content to brave the remainder of his allotted time in the mundane

state of loneliness; and as he was also an old-tine Quaker, he bethought to himself ~~that~~ it would be about the right thing to do to offer himself to my grandmother. I vividly remember his first visit. It was of a week day and my father and my brother George were cutting wood in the woods near Little Pond, the small boy in question being present. Like many another of Cupid's tribe, Mr. Gaskill did not enter upon his scheme with boldness but feigned to have some important business with my father as he stood around and talked while my father chopped; I do not remember the conversation but my impression is that Mr. Gaskill made a pretense of wishing to buy something of my father. However this may be, it was evident that the real purpose of Mr. Gaskill's visit was non other than to make the acquaintance of my grandmother.

The next visit was on Sunday afternoon; and for several succeeding Sundays were these visits continued, until my father became suspicious of Mr. Gaskill's designs. Mr. Gaskill was a very close-managing man and my father was of the opinion that should my grandmother marry him, she would be cut off from any right in his estate, and for this reason was very much opposed to the match. I, of course, was too young to have much conception of what was going on but I well remember hearing my father giving Mr. Gaskill a very strong reprimand for coming there as he did; and I am of the opinion that he was forbidden to come any more, for, as I remember it, he did not visit my grandmother at my father's house again. True love, however, is always hard to defeat and in this case it finally became the victor, for on a visit of my grandmother to her daughter Martha, who married Leonard Taft, she again met the doting swain, when a bargain was soon consummated and carried into effect; and, as my father had surmised, her rights to Mr. Gaskill's estate were waived by the signing of a contract to that effect. My father died the next year and

Mr. Gaskil a few years later, when my grandmother again took up her abode with my mother, never regretting, however, so far as I ever heard, her second matrimonial venture into married life.

The breaking up of my childhood home seems to have been the transition point of my life, for while previous to then I have but a vague recollection of things, from immediately afterwards everything seems more clear. At the time of my father's death it was the custom to have what might be termed a feast-funeral and to invite everybody back from the grave to partake of the choicest viands the host could afford. It was at Thanksgiving time that my father died and while we, of course, did not have any Thanksgiving feast, or were in the mood for one, there was an all due preparation for the feasting of all who attended my father's funeral. There were two maiden sisters (Olive and Mary Howard) in the neighborhood who were ever ready with their assistance in times of sickness and death, and I distinctly remember their both being present to help my mother prepare for the funeral. My parents were both of Quaker descent, and a Quakeress preacher by the name of Mercy Thayer, who was a fluent speaker, preached my father's funeral sermon. He was buried with his father's people in the old burying ground east of Mumford River in Uxbridge, and about forty years later was removed to the Blackstone Company graveyard, where his dust now reposes by the side of my mother.

At the time of my father's death my brother George was twenty-three years old and had been away from home more or less for three or four years; and as I remember it, my mother and myself were alone most of the winter following. I never enjoyed going to school very much and I don't remember that I went to any great extent this winter.

Our home was an out-of-the-way place and, being alone with my mother and not under much restriction, I very naturally began to roam

about the neighborhood to a more or less extent, where I could mingle with other boys. Arnold Taft, who wrote my father's will, lived about a mile away through the fields, crosslots, and of his fourteen children some of them were about my age. I remember of being there a great deal, in season and out of season, and I have no doubt that many times my absence would have been considered far preferable to my company to Mr. and Mrs. Taft; but I was but ten years old and too young to have much discretion of my own in my movements; and as I was going it, as the saying is, pretty much as I pleased, I presume that in many ways I became somewhat of a nuisance to the neighborhood in general.

*Arnold Taft with his brother Stephen (Uncle Steve as they used to call him) were very extensive farmers and business men and with all their abundant facilities for carrying on their business came the nearest to being independent of the rest of the world of anybody I have any recollection of. They had a very large farm with many broad fields of cultivation and the pasturing of cattle. They had extensive meadow lands, and wood and timber lands in abundance. They had a brickyard where they made brick; a sawmill; and a shingle mill for sawing boards and timber and the making of shingles. They had a carpenter's shop and a blacksmith shop; and what was almost wonderful in those days, they had a turning lathe that went by foot-power, for turning any kind of round woodwork. With all these new and wonderful things at hand, and the playmates found at this grand old farm which was a great contrast to the one I had been used to, it can hardly be wondered at that I was much in evidence at every opportunity.

The Tafts had a large two-story brick house, which they built themselves, making the brick in their own pit, sawing the timber,

*Lamothe's 1831 map Arnold & Stephen Taft 1870 map A. Taft
1857 map A. & S. Taft 1898 map G.H. DeWolfe

the boards, and the shingles in their own mills; and it is presumed that many of the bolts, spikes, and nails used in this edifice were made in their own blacksmith shop. I remember of many happy days spent among this Taft family. The rooms of their house were large, like their family, and everything they did was on a large scale. They had large fireplaces; and when stoves came into use, they were large also; and as the food of those days was largely home-grown, the meal chest in the Arnold Taft kitchen was a sight to behold. It is a long time ago that I saw it but as I remember it I should say it was as much as nine feet long, three and one-half feet high and the same wide, with three or four lids that lifted up to get to the different compartments for the various kinds of meal it contained. The top of this meal chest was a catch-all for almost everything and often was used to sit upon and to lie down upon; and many is the time that I rem ember of playing on this monster meal chest with the many children of this Taft family.

The mother of this army of children was a stout, forceful woman, and with all her vast brood to care for she certainly had all one women would naturally want to contend with without any reinforcement from the neighborhood, but in all my visits there and in all my running about in her kitchen, on the meal chest, and elsewhere, I recall no time when a single cross or fretful act or word was shown or uttered by her. She was always very busy with her work, and in fact was obliged to be; and although working hard and necessarily contending with much, she always wore a graceful smile.

Something good to eat is always in order with the small boy and the luscious great big doughnuts Aunt Martha (Patty , as our hostess was known) used to make (and her plump apple, mince, and pumpkin pies) were an attraction I had no disposition to reject. Everything was on a large scale at Arnold Taft's and whatever they bought was done in the same line. The first smoked or dried herring I remember

of ever seeing was here, and they bought them by the box; and well do I remember going up into the attic chamber of their large house with James Taft (a twin son of Arnold - and twin brother of Jane Alexander) to get a meal from this herring box, and to this day I never set eyes on dried herring without a recurrence to my mind of my first taste of this then delightful edible at the Taft house.

Arnold Taft was the son of Thomas Taft, he formerly living on the same farm; and on top of Wigwam Hill were Thomson and Reuben Taft, who were the sons of Nathaniel Taft, a brother of the above Thomas. This was some farther away from my house but I remember of being up there a great many times and seeing a great many things that took my eye. All the Taft race had a genius for mechanics and in this case there was no exception. Reuben had a small farm and a considerable family, and was a carpenter by trade, and I well remember the great big broad-axe he used to have and use. He was quite a round-shouldered man and when he walked had the habit of swinging his hands well behind him, so much so that the boys, as well as some older ones, would sometimes try to imitate him and walk as he did, to create a laugh. He was an inoffensive man and the only oaths I remember of hearing him use were "by time" and "by hitty".

Thomson Taft was also a farmer and a mechanic; his farm was larger than Reuben's, and I don't remember of his going out to work for others. He had but one son, who also was a carpenter, and together they built the only real public monument the town of Mendon ever had. It stood on the higest peak of Wigwam Hill and was the wonder of all the country around. It was a large square structure, with several stories one above the other, and in viewing from it's highest eminence and with a spy-glass a very large range of country in all directions could be seen.

Thomson Taft, Sr. (his son being named Thomson also) was a large

powerful man and had his own peculiar ways, and when coming in contact with others of different ways there was apt to be some exhibition of dissent on the part of "Uncle Thomp" as he was sometimes called. As said above, the Wigwam Hill monument was considerable of a wonder and people from miles around were in the habit of going there; Sundayschool picnics were held there, and for a time it was a place for general resort; and I remember there was a great deal of talk about the way Uncle Thomp would get after the boys when they overstepped his idea of correctness. In the wintertime dances were often held in this momumental structure and, according to reports, a good many good times were often had there, but when Uncle Thomp was around everybody was expected to toe-the-mark or hear a forceful reprimand in his loud drawn-out speech, from him. At one of these dances a set of ruffs put in an appearance and, supposing that in so out-of-the-way place as that ~~was~~ they would be licensed to cut a few dashes, they soon began to make their presence known by direful distubances, never dreaming that the constabulary forces of that section would be adequate to their strength; but Uncle Thomp was on duty and the wily sports were forced to call on the peaceful members of the company to protect them from their raging foe, and when Uncle Thomp was being held back from the unruly sports by his friends, he cried out "let me alone, let me alone, I want to kill um". The old monument, however, became a back number and was finally taken down and the lumber put into another building.

The name of Uncle Thompson's wife was Joan and far and near she was known by the familiar name of Aunt Joan. She was a strong-minded woman and, like her husband, had her own peculiar ways. She took the Boston Weekly Post and was a dyed-in-the-wool Democrat. She was a cleanly housekeeper but did everything in a strictly old-fashioned way. I remember of being in her house a great many times and vividly recollet

her form and figure; and the way it looked in her living room. There was a large old-fashioned fireplace, that in winter was always cheerful; a hardwood table, flag-bottom chairs, and a very large, old-fashioned, high-backed settle. On one end of this most cosy old settle, in the wintertime, there was pretty sure to be a small-handled basket full of some eatable variety of apples, which were free to all; and, as I recall it, my preferred seat in Aunt Joan's house was on this old red-painted settle. Carpets were not in favor with Aunt Joan for she had been brought up to sanded floors, but the floors she did have were a sight to behold. For most of the time her floor was covered with the cleanest and whitest of sand but when occasion required, the broom and the scrubbing utensils were brought into play and the result was a spit-span white, clean floor that was in readiness for the elite of the neighborhood to walk upon.

In a northerly direction from my old home, and something more than a mile across the fields, were Abram Staples and wife Martha, and Johnson Legg and wife Chloe - known by all of the young folks as Uncle Abram and Aunt Martha and Uncle Johnson and Aunt Chloe; the latter were of the good old Quaker stock and wore the Quaker garb. These neighbors were on the way to school and I had become very well acquainted with them on this account; and besides, Aunt Chloe was a special friend of my mother and grandmother; and, to express an opinion, I should say she was a special friend to everybody she ever knew. Like my grandmother, she wore the Quaker bonnet and cap, and her gentle and smooth white face was a veritable benediction to all who came into her presence. She was a sister to Abram Staples, and mother to the Rachel and Alpha Freeman above referred to, she being the Widow Freeman before marrying Johnson Legg. She had another daughter, named Lucy, who married a Lovell for her first husband, and when I was a boy she had become a widow and returned

home to her mother with her two children, Hisler and Baron Lovell. Johnson Legg and Abram Staples lived very near to each other and my early acquaintance with them and their families was probably more complete than with any in the neighborhood, and as there are many things and experiences to be referred to in connection with them later on, I will now return to the scenes of the old homestead.

Soon after my father's death it was in some way revealed to me that I must relinquish my childhood home and start out somewhere, not then dreamed of, to earn my own support; and with the neighbors there seemed to be a sentiment that this was the only thing for me to do. A little incident occurred about this time which, though somewhat ridiculous, pleased my mother. There was a boy in the neighborhood by the name of Putnam Hayward, who was about two years my senior. He had been brought up among old people and consequently had taken on ways that were older than his years, and hence he one day came to see my mother, to advise her in relation to the managing of her newly conditioned affairs; and among other good points of advice he told my mother that he for one should advise her to bind that boy (meaning me) out and that Salman Wood, a townsman who was in want of a boy, was a good place for me to begin my bondage. I never heard my mother say a word about binding me out and don't think she ever entertained any such idea but she did encourage my going to work for Mr. Wood. At first I didn't take very kindly to doing so but after a boy's consideration of the matter I seemed to get the idea that it would be exceedingly smart to start out from the home circle and to some extent become my own man; and accordingly I proposed to my mother that if she would let Old Dime go with me, I would make the attempt of earning my own living. It was something more than two miles from my home to where Mr. Wood lived, nearly half of this distance being across the fields; and I well remember my journey there in company with my old friend, Dog Dime; and whether

or not he had any conception of what was going on, he followed me all of the way to Mr. Wood's and for two or three days remained very contentedly with me; but to my very great dismay I found one morning that he had proved to me false and had returned to his wonted hearth. Mr. Wood was a hard-fisted man and worked himself and everybody else beyond reason; and from this, and the fact that the absence of Old Dime had caused me to begin to be homesick, on the fifth day of my first service out I told Mr. Wood I guessed I would throw up my job. This didn't suit Mr. Wood at all and he wouldn't let me go home till he could go with me so as to persuade my mother to force me to go back with him. This didn't work, however, for when I got back into my mother's presence, my fear of Mr. Wood was gone and I well remember how I spunked up courage and told him it was no use to talk of the matter further for I should not and would not go back with him, and to my great satisfaction my mother showed no disposition to force me to do so. This was in the wintertime, some two or three months after my father's death, and I am inclined to think that I didn't go to school to any extent all that winter but roamed about the neighborhood at will till spring.

As spring opened and something could be done on the land, I began to work for Abram Staples, helping him on the farm for twenty-five cents a day, he boarding me a part of the day if not the whole - which, I don't seem to recall. Abram was a good man to get along with boys, and with the other family associations, I was very well contented to work there. Abram's son Linus had learned the trade of siding boots so-called, which was to close together the sides of the old-fashioned long-legged boots that were worn by nearly every man and boy in those days; and he employed more or less help in his business. Linus occupied one of the chambers in his father's house and during the spare time of noons and rainy days I spent considerable time watch-

ing him and his help as they waxed their tapers and sewed together the seams of these leg-boots. This work attracted me very much and I soon began to try my hand at the work whenever opportunity occurred, and it as not long before I was able to not only make and wax the tapers but to close together the seams, as well, apparently, as the other help. This evidently suited Linus for it was not long before he proposed that I should go to work for him entirely and leave the out-of-door work I was doing for his father. This was a glad proposal to me and I hurried home to my mother to see what she thought of my accepting it, but to my great disappointment she did not aanction the movement at all, saying that she did not think it a good business for a boy to enter into. My mother hadknown the old-time cardermen that used to go around from house to house to make the boots and shoes for the family, and as these people were sometimes not of the better class my mother was fearful of the bad influence of the business. My mother, however, did not exercise great restraint over me and I took the matter into my own hands and went to work for Linus.

The next spring after my father died my mother let the farm to Eber Kies Brown and moved to the house of Austin Arnold Taft, sone of the above Arnold Taft, on the south side of Wigwam Hill; and I can well remember the quite heated controversy I had with my mother at this place in regard to my becoming a "shoemaker" as she termed it. It was of a Sunday afternoon and I can almost see myself now as I stood around pleading and arguing for my side of the case. I made little impression on my mother, however, until I brought matters to a grand finale by declaring that there was no use talking - I was going to work for Linus Staples - and go I did that very afternoon. It was after we had eaten our supper that I took some extra clothing from my mother, bid her goodby, and walked over Wigwam

Hill to my destination, so as to be ready for my new business on Monday morning. This, I think, was in May, just about the time of my eleventh birthday, and for a boy of this age it seems to me now that I was taking rather a bold stand in going contrary to my mother's wishes, but as things turned out I am inclined to think ~~now~~ that I was the gainer for my action. It was the ruling fate of my life, however, for from this time on til I was about forty-five years old I was a worker of leather in some form.

1834 43 1879

It was but about two miles from where my mother lived to the Staples place where I went to work but, although I had not nearly reached my teens, I spunked it out and didn't go home for some two or three weeks, when my mother concluded to come and see what I was about. As I sensed it she was much better pleased with what I was doing than at first she thought she would be, for she entered into a bargain with Linus for me to work two months for my board, and afterwards to have $4 a month. This was satisfactory to me for I was not so particular about what I received for my services as I was that I might be allowed to stay where I was. This job was not of long duration, however, for while I do not quite recall all of the circumstances I remember ~~that~~ I was working ~~out~~ about the neighborhood, and all down through the fall was working more or less out-of-doors.

I worked some for Elijah Thayer of Chestnut Hill, whom some people called crazy; and I vividly recall that one day he set me to work brushing in hayseed with a pair of brindle steers, and went off somewhere and left me. It was one of those special days that black flies put in their work, and with the great hungry swarms of them that pounced down upon us both cattle and boy were nearly driven crazy. It was almost impossible to keep the cattle in the field, and for myself - the only way that I was able to overcome the pesky things was by

wrapping my spencer about my head and peeking out through the rolled-up sleeves.

Elijah Thayer was a very eccentric man and on the subject of religion he might be called somewhat crazy, but when he came to doing business with other people there was many a man who had cause to conclude that his sanity was all there. From the fact of his having the reputation of being crazy, he sometimes was able to do things with impunity that otherwise would have caused him serious trouble; but with his bold, somewhat lunatic appearance, he always managed to extricate himself from whatever seeming trouble he got himself into. On account of his many eccentricities, his father made his will to Elijah's disfavor, causing him to rave and ~~toil~~ tear and rebound beyond endurance to the rest of the family, and on the day of his father's funeral Elijah took himself away from home, saying "let the dead bury their dead", a quotation of scripture which he was famous for saying; and when getting home in the afternoon, before the attendants at the funeral had all departed, he demanded that they should leave the premises at once. The unsatisfactory will was set up, however, and everything seemed to be going along in the usual way, but before it had been entered on the Probate records Elijah very meekly presented himself to the probate officer and asked permission to see his father's will. This request was speedily granted by the officer - he never dreaming that any usury was being done - but when crazy Elijah had scrutinized the instrument to his heart's content, he quickly laid it into the stove, onto a hot blazing fire, and in the twinkling of an eye the obnoxi ous will was gone up in smoke. To a man of known sanity, this would have brought a term behind the bars,

but with his lunatic reputation and his put-on appearance of being crazy, the matter was dropped and the estate was settled by law.

He was also called Profit Elijah and under this title he took more or less pride for he did indeed so style himself. He claimed to be in communication with departed spirits through whom he was able to foretell, as he claimed, many things and events. One of his greatest eccentricities was his claim that he should never die but be transfigured like as was Elijah of old, and until within a few weeks of his death, when an old man, did he relinquish his claim to this belief. Our profit at one time took it into his head that it was his duty to go to Jerusalem to correct some of the errors, as he thought, that were being taught there; and when getting there he soon became an object of distrust and it was said that but for his apparent insanity he would have been dealt with in a vicious manner. He also becoming strapped, as the saying is, his only safety then depended on his calling on the U. S. consul there for aid, who took him in charge and sent him home.

An amusing incident occurred between Prophet Elijah and my brother George, which I call to mind, and with this we will leave the prophetic part of our theme. My brother lived in the same neighborhood, and not far apart, and when going to town our prophet would pass by my brother's house and in doing so often stop to give my brother a lecture on religion, claiming at the same time, as usual, that he was immune from death. My brother having heard this till he had become thoroughly disgusted with his visionary assertions, at last told him with considerable emphasis, that Elijah Thayer came into the world in the same manner as other folks and that in all human probability he would go out the same; and when reading the notice of the death and burial of Profit Elijah, and observing that my brother was one of his bearers to the grave, I wasreminded that there was more than one prophet in the procession.

THINGS I REMEMBER

To go back to my experience with black flies, I recall that I worked some, and roamed the neighborhood some, all down through the fall til wintertime, when I went to school (a part of the time at least) in the old brick schoolhouse at Chestnut Hill. I don't seem to remember who taught the school for my mind was generally absorbed in other directions. The seats in the schoolhouse were of very old style, they rising back from the middle floor, one above the other on either side till they reached the outer walls; there being desks in front of each seat, on which to write and under which to keep our books and dinner pail or basket as the case might be.

Andrew Jackson Taft, son of Dudley ——→, was a little older than myself, and he and I sat together. His mother was famous for making the old-fashioned buttered and sugared flapjacks, and her son Jack, as we called him, used sometimes to bring to school a three-pint tin pail packed nearly full of these palate-tempting cakes; and I never shall forget how, when the master's back was turned, Jack would slyly remove the cover off of his dinner pail, and together we would lunch on its contents; and I never think of the old brick schoolhouse and Andrew Jack Taft but that the remembrance of his mother's flapjacks is uppermost in my mind.

David Martin of Uxbridge was a famous penman and I remember that he kept "writing school" in the old brick tavern winter. I think my mother paid my tuition to go to this writing school for I recall that I was there, and remember how taken up I was with the scrollwork animals and birds Mr. Martin would draw with his pen. He would also take two pens, one in each hand, and write in opposite directions,

a skill which at times seemed to me a wonder in itself.

It was during my sojourn in Chestnut Hill that I did my first and last gambling; I remember that Jack Taft, myself, and two other boys (not recalled who) in some way became possessed of a pack of cards and a cent each, and that down in the woods not far from where Jack lived, at the Stephen Turtelotte place, we sat down on the ground together, in man-fashion style, and played cards for the enticing pot. I fail to remember who won but I shall never forget this game of cards and the degradation I felt I had fallen into in the operation.

My brother boarded with my mother this winter, and in the spring we all moved back to the old home, my mother thinking that with my brother's help, and perhaps what I could do, she could carry on the farm. My brother and I had never played together and somehow we didn't amalgamate very well working together, and the result was that I soon skipped the farm and took to boots again; this time working for a man by the name of William Lapham, who worked in the "old red shop" ~~so-called~~ at what was then called Horse Corner (now Albeeville) and which was near the old schoolhouse of my first experience at school, ~~above referred to~~. Lapham boarded with Alanson Freeman, across the street, and I boarded with Abram Fletcher, close by the shop. This didn't last long for within two or three months Lapham ran away without paying his bills and never to my knowledge was heard of afterwards. It was then that Linus Staples, my first employer on boots, moved into the same shop and I again entered his employ, working for him til some time in September (about two months), when the Ezra Leland shop at Mendon Center was destroyed by fire, throwing us all out of work, and as I was needed no longer, I went back home to live with my mother.

7 [illegible] this must have been the [illegible] later Horace Randall home

THINGS I REMEMBER

This was in 1846, and It was this year that the Albeeville new schoolhouse was built and ready for occupancy and I, for a wonder, took it into my head to go to school. Clarissa Darling, daughter of Leonard U. Darling, of Chestnut Hill, was the teacher and a good one she was. She was not exactly a young woman but was tall and stout and full of determination, and although in no way unreasonable or revengeful in her treatment, every scholar had to get onto his job or have a quick reckoning with her. I think I learned a little something with her and remember that for once I had a pleasant time at school. I was twelve years old and it being the fall term there were probably not many scholars who attended who were very much older. However this may be, it is doubtful if a baker's dozen of them all are still (1904) living.

This was the Seventh School District of Mendon and was a grand old precinct of itself. *Enos Alby (Albee) carried on the boot business near the schoolhouse and with the quite a number of workmen he employed there was always a lively time in and about this old shop. I recall a great many things in connection with the old Seventh School District, and also with the immediate surroundings of its schoolhouse, which were of much interest to me. This was the center and rallying ground of the District. School districts then carried on their own business to a great extent independently of the town; built their own schoolhouses; hired their own teachers; and in fact were a sort of miniature municipality of themselves, all bills being paid from assessment of their own members. It was at the schoolhouse that the members of the District gathered together to transact their public business, and often times there was great excitement at these meetings when forceful if not violent language would be used. It is remembered that Mr. Simeon Wheelock at one time became greatly enraged

* Carl Wagner house and yard ~ shop was more than one story.

because of some proposal he didn't agree with and that after listening to his fiery tirade for awhile, Lovell Howard became frightened and made quick-step-time for home; and on inquiry of a neighbor whom he ~~charged~~ chanced to meet, as to his great hurry, Lovell replied that Sim Wheelock was up at the school meeting, madder than H and D and somebody would get hurt. There were also many other public gatherings here - meetings for religious worship, Sunday schools; and temperance lectures were of common occurrence. Traveling shows and exhibitions of all kinds were often held there, and last but not least were the never-to-be-forgotten old-fashioned spelling schools and home-talent-speaking schools and exhibitions; and altogether the interest that centered around the old Seventh School District schoolhouse was grand and glorious to recall.

In wintertime there was a large skating pond just across the way from this schoolhouse, and when skating was good the whole school would flock to this ice field. Girls didn't skate then as now but with the boys who could skate racing and circling about, and those who couldn't, with the girls sliding on sleds or their feet, the fun and frolic was so interesting that sadness was on every brow at the ringing of the teacher's bell.

The more I dwell on this theme, the more am I tempted to add the names of the members of this dearly cherished school district. Beginning at the school and going towards Chestnut Hill, we first come to the house of Abram Staples and Martha his wife, of whom mention has been made. They had Linus, Sally, Jackson, and Edward - all of whom attended school either in the old or the new schoolhouse.

We next come to Johnson Legge and Chloe his wife - the children all belonging to the wife (her first husband being Alpheus Freeman) - they were Alanson, Lucy, Rachel, Monroe, and Alpa, all of whom at the time of speaking were grown up and married.

THINGS I REMEMBER

(Samothes) The next house was that of ARnold Taft and wife Martha - and Stephen Taft who was never married. The children of Arnold and Martha were - Charlotte, Austin, Betsy, Lewis, Henry, George, Martha, Clarendon, Charles, Adin, Myra's father + Ina French's Waterman, James, Jane, Anna - about half of whom were grown up at time of speaking.

With my father and mother, my brother George and myself, the District is completed.

From the schoolhouse toward Uxbridge, we come to Varvilla Taft and wife; they had Sophia, Seth, Lydia, and Hewell(?) who all were not far from my age.

Next was Thomas Taft (brother of Arnold above) and wife; they had Sullivan, Almy Aldrich father? Hannah, Alanson, Eliza, Samuel, Jefferson, and Mercy —— Susan.?

Towards Mendon Center was Enos Albee and wife Deborah, who had one son, Charles. C. Wagner's, 1967

Then Benoni Staples and wife Deborah, with no children.

Next was Alanson Freeman with wife Caroline, who had Jane, Liberty, Franklin, Chloe, Sarah, Alice, Flora, and Alanson, all of whom attended ~~at~~ the new schoolhouse; and I remember when Alanson Sr. used to keep school in the old brick schoolhouse some fifty rods away from the new. He was an excellent teacher and I recall that in winter he usually went about the school room in his shirt-sleeves, ~~he~~ claiming that with heat enough to keep the scholars comfortable, he was too warm with a coat on.

This schoolhouse was decided by old-fasioned. There was a continuous desk up against the wall on three sides; with a door and a fireplace, with chimney, on the other. In front of this desk was also a continuous seat for the larger scholars, who, when studying, could face the stove, which was in the center of the room, or could swing their limbs over their seats and face the walls. Under this desk was where

dinner pails were kept, and in the course of the noon-hour a good many other things got thrown there. I recall that at one time one of the larger girls brought a very large-sized doughnut to school and that instead of being consumed it got into the hands of wily boys, who tossed it about the school room til it finally landed on the floor under said desk. When this huge doughnut was behind the seat of some of the larger girls, and after school had begun, they could not forget their noon-hour sport and consequently kept peeking under the desk and breaking out into a giggle. Mr. Freeman soon discovered that something unusual must be there and reaching down under the desk brought out the monster, when the whole school broke out in a roar. The teacher was silent for a time but after the scholars had become quiet he deposited the doughnut on his desk, saying that the first one who laughed would get his or her ?

Next from Alanson Freeman's was Simeon Wheelock and wife. They had Mary Ann, Mercy, Fanny, and Ellen; and by his first wife Simeon had several other children, one of whom was Caroline, the wife of Alanson Freeman.

Near Mendon Pond were Ellis Taft and wife, and Alonzo Taft and wife; the latter had Phila, Elizabeth, and John; and the former had Luther, Charlotte, Adelaide, all of whom attended school with the writer.

On the back road so-called was Madison Staples with wife, who had Maria.

Then Jason Staples, with wife Phila, who had Esban, Carleton, Caroline, Nahor, Henry E, and Rachel. I do not recall going to school with the two older ones but Carleton was an early teacher in the new schoolhouse and I have always held him as one of the best who ever taught there. He afterwards studied for the ministry and has spent a long life in that profession; he now (1904) being settled at

* David Lowell's

Lexington, Massachusetts. His brother Nahor was also a noted divine, formerly occupying one of the first Unitarian pulpits at Brooklyn, New York, but by exposure in the Army of the Rebellion, he being chaplain of the , he was gathered to the fathers soon after.

Lovell Howard was a noted character - industrious, kind-hearted, and harmless but in a sense peculiar. His wife was Polly, and to them Mary and Olive were born and to a great extent they were a chip of the old block; Polly died before my remembrance. To Olive a son was born - his name was Putnam Hayward the same who, as above-stated, advised my mother to bind her boy out. All through my boyhood did these four live together on a small farm about a mile from the schoolhouse in a southerly direction. They were a happy and jovial lot, always cheerful and full of laughable stories and neighborhood gossip. Their house was small and stood quite a distance in from the road, and I vividly recall their style of living. There were two rooms ~~in their house~~ and an attic room above, all of which were full to overflowing. Their front room was used for kitchen, bedroom, and parlor, and all slept in this room in an old-fashioned bed ~~and~~ a trundle bed. They had a very large fireplace, before which many times I have joined the group in social chat, and also ~~before~~ at which all cooking was done; and in fact, long after other people had begun to use the stoves did they continue to use the open fire. Lovell was a cooper by trade and all the neighborhood used to go there with their cooping jobs, and when driving hoops on cider and other barrels he took great pride in playing the caper dang - cooper dang-cooper dang-dang-dang that the old-time coopers used to delight in doing when people were present to hear them. The fates, however, were against this eccentric quartet for by a fall on his cooper's axe Lovell died. Putnam was drafted in the War of the Rebellion and died with

maglignant ; and Mary and Olive both died in the poorhouse; and thus with a sad ending the family became extinct.

Enos Albee was one of the early manufacturers of sole boots and a very nice man he was. He was also an early Whig and voted for Tippecanoe and Tyler too, and by his much arguing for his side of the question he was nicknamed "Old Tip". His temperament was remarkable for he didn't seem to know how to get mad or even to scold, and his workmen often took great advantage of his easy disposition.

Simeon Wheelock's daughter Mercy married a man by the name of Warren Ross, who was a very nice sort of a young man and for harmless sport he could not be excelled. He worked for Old Tip for a good many years and during his stay there he was the instigator of a great number of fun-making schemes. There was also a man by the name of Chauncy Bangs who worked there, whose special achievement was the imitating of swine. Back in those days it was often the case that a drove of hogs was driven through the country for sale and at one time Enos bought a pig from out a drove, putting the new porker into his pen. This opened up an opportunity for Ross and Bangs to have some sport and accordingly they arranged that Bangs should do the grunting and squealing and Ross should spring the game. Deviltry craves darkness, of course, and after Enos had completed his chores and got well settled into his easy chair for an evening's recreation, Ross opened the door and cried out "Enos, your pig is out". This of course stirred Old Tip to great activity, when he broke out and said "where is he?" Ross, with pretended great anxiety, cried out "he is down behind the wall", when about this time actor Bangs became a quadruped and with a hog accent grunted and squealed. Old Tip one short leg, on which he wore a thick, corked, solid boot, and in sequence of this crippled condition he made quite a low graceful bow

with every step he took. Everything seemed to retard progress but finally, with a lighted lantern in hand, he burst out of the house and with hobbling and bowing, hobbling and bowing, was soon at the wall where Ross had said the pig was on the other side. At this Bangs renewed his pig music and commenced to run up and down the wall, and with Old Tip one side and Bangs the other - one running and the other chasing after - crying "piggie", "piggie", "piggie" - the sport was immense for those who had been let into the game; and Ross, with shaking sides, was bent nearly to the ground in his ecstasies. The joke was now complete, however, and Bangs suddenly returned to manhood in the near presence of the deceived, when with great astonishment Old Tip cried out "D--- the Frenchman".

Enos also had a helper by the name of Albinus Mann, who was the butt of the whole neighborhood, and one evening when deviltry ran riot Albinus was put into a large long coarse sack and tied up like a bag of potatoes. This, of course, disabled him from doing anything but bound and rebound about the dooryard until by his unearthly yells Old Tip was brought to the door, to give release, when, with the vilest and swift-repeated oaths, Albinus lashed his persecutors.

There was a real Indian wigwam in the old Seventh School District and a family of real skins lived there. Their names were Pease, and while I never heard much said about the head of the family, Patience, the old squaw, was always much in evidence tramping about the neighborhood with her brood of papooses, and in many ways she was very cute and witty. She had a great love for ardent spirits and often indulged in them to the impossibility of her equilibrium, and for this reason she was sometimes denied, by the sellers of spirits, any more. The hotel at Mendon Center was kept by a man named William Green, who once told her she had had enough and that she couldn't have any more for a

certain length of time. She was cute, however, and soon concocted a plan by which she could outwit the hotel-keeper. In warm weather she was in the habit of going bare-footed, and one morning she appeared at the hotel with a very sore toe and begged for some new rum in which to bathe it; and the hotel-keeper, noticing that she had quite a large bandage on her toe, showed his pity by passing her out the desired rum in one of the glasses used on the bar; and as quick as thought Lady Pease grasped the glass and fairly threw its contents down her throat, at the same time kicking out her feet with great force and repeating "go down there, go down there". She had a son born about this time and one day when at this hotel she asked Mr. Green to name her boy for her; and Mr. Green proposed the name of Green, after himself; but Lady Pease quickly rejected this name, saying she wouldn't have her boy named Green Pease. These Indians left Mendon nearly sixty years ago (1904) but the spot where their wigwam stood is still green and easily detected by the passerby.

Returning to my fall term at school, to Clarissa Darling, will say that I also attended the winter term and Carleton Staples, who was among the best of teachers, taught the school. I remember that all through the term I took special interest in my studies and felt considerable pride in my accomplishments but as I recall it I don't remember that I ever again took any interest in schoolwork afterwards.

As my brother George had sickened of the farm the fall before, my mother and myself spent the winter on the old homestead alone, and as neither of her boys seemed disposed to work the farm, she decided to sell it, which she accordingly did. A man by the name of Willis Southwick wanted to buy the buildings and a portion of the land and as his offer would pay off the mortgage, mother concluded to let him have it. Southwick moved in immediately after and before

my mother could arrange to move out, and thus for a short while both occupied the house together. Mr. Southwick had no wife and consequently boarded himself, his diet being broken crackers from the bake shop; and I remember how almost sad it looked to me to see him come in to his meals from his work and without table or tableware make his entire meal out of nothing but water from the well and his broken crackers. This was in the days of heating bakers ? with fagots, and as Mr. Southwick had paid for his broken crackers with fagots which he had made on the farm, by cutting and tying up small brush into a bundle about the size of a sheaf of wheat, it will be seen that he did not have a very costly living. This was the breaking up of the home and also the breaking up of the family for not until I was grown up did I live, except for a few weeks at a time, with my mother again.

I was then about thirteen years old and the same Linus Staples whom I had twice worked for before offered me thirty dollars and the winter term of schooling if I would work for him a year; and as he was about to marry a young woman with whom I felt I should have a good home, my mother and myself concluded it best for me to accept the offer; and soon after the commencement of my term of service I had the pleasure of witnessing the uniting of two souls til death doth them part; and I remember that while the minister was repeating the marriage ceremony, how astonished I became to see a sister of the bride shedding a flood of tears, but when realizing that the bride was about to leave the family fireside and in all probability to never become a member of it again, I could easily comprehend the tearful exhibition. I had often heard it said that when working out if you kept on the right side of the woman, everything would go well and it is one of the real satisfying experiences of my life to call back to mind the kindnesses received at the hands of Mrs. Linus Staples.

THINGS I REMEMBER

In going to housekeeping, Linus and his new wife moved into a tenement on the Arnold Taft farm above referred to and thus I was brought back onto the old stamping ground of earlier childhood. There were three houses on the farm - Arnold and his brother Stephen both keeping house separately in the new brick house, and with two families in the old Taft house nearby - one of which having fourteen children - there never was any lack of a quorum for any kind of a game.

I don't remember of playing games very much but at the end of the day's work there was always something doing both with the older and younger ones. Old Zebedee Young who lived in the old Taft house, was very good at pitching quoits and with two or three on a side would pitch their game til it was so dark it was hard to see the object they were pitching at; and I well remember how excited old Uncle Zebedee (Zeb) used to get and how the tobacco juice would fly from his mouth. The old-fashioned round ball was the same then and with quite a delegation on each side they often had very exciting games of ball. In case of a lack of the requisite number for round ball, we used to have a game of what was called barn tick, which was played by one throwing the ball up against the ~~ball~~ barn, being the catcher also. Two could play the game or if more were present sides would be chosen and the game played the same as with round ball. High kicking and high jumping were a favorite pastime and I remember that Nahor Staples above referred to was one of the most successful ones in this kind of sport and at times when he was present it would be nine or ten o'clock at night before the game would be given up, so interested would all become.

Uncle Zebedee Young, although an old man, was very fond of hunting and fishing, his favorite game being coons that he would go hunting

for during the fall months, as they came out of the woods at night time to feed in the cornfields. He had a favorite old hound dog for the purpose and on moonlight nights together they would start out for a coon hunt, and if an encounter was had, the tones of the old dog would be wafted all through the neighborhood on the midnight air, when all would understand that Uncle Zeb and his favorite dog were getting in their work. At one time I remember that Uncle Zeb's old dog took it into his head to go on a drive expedition of his own and this time it was a day time hunt; and as coons were not found in the open then he took himself to the Little Pond woods not far away, where he encountered an old coon and five or six young ones. This was a hard battle for the old coon all the time endeavoring to protect her young from sure death should the dog reach them. Her efforts were fruitless, however, for although she herself escaped by getting into the water, her brood were all captured and killed by the dog. During this conflict there was a great amount of bellowing by the old dog, which reached the ears of Uncle Zeb, who, with some assistance, was soon on the ground and to the great surprise of all it was found that the old dog had buried every young coon killed deep in the moss of the swamp, where by diligent search all were found.

The third Wednesday in May was formerly an Election Day and after discontinuance it was long kept as a holiday when hunting game and a good dinner were in order, when the gunners of the town would choose up sides and after determining the number each kind of game should be counted for, all would start out for the contest. All kinds of game had to suffer, from a woodchuck to a catbird, each counting so much on the score, and whenreturning to some convenient place for supper, the side who had the largest tallys was expected to pay for the whole spread. Arnold Taft was a very liberal feeder

and on these Election Days used to kill one of his veals and, besides his children and grandchildren, would invite all of the friends and immediate neighbors to an old Election dinner; and I well remember the great swarm of people that used to come and partake of his gracious hospitality, to such an extent that two or three long tables full would sit down in turn as called in by the host or hostess.

Arnold Taft had a son Henry who was a natural musician and easily learned to play the bugle, and my recollection is of how he used to get out on the hill back of the house on warm pleasant evenings and ring out on the evening air his beautiful bugle notes, and to this day (1904) I can almost hear those striking musical tones. Henry was a great favorite of both the neighborhood and his people, and I remember that after being absent several months on a musical tour the whole neighborhood stayed up til about midnight to welcome him home. On this musical trip he had taken up other instruments, and when returning had become a player on the piano and the guitar, and withal a beautiful singer; and the beautiful songs he used to sing by the accompaniement of his guitar are still ringing in my mind - I cannot recall much that he sang but the chorus of one of his songs ran thus: "O give me a cot in the valley I love; a tent in the greenery; a home in the grave; I care not how humble for happy t'would be, if one faithful heart would but share it with me". Like many another, however, who have attained success in any particular direction, our Henry was full of unrest, and after stopping at home for a year or so he (in 1849) sailed around Cape Horn to the California gold fields and became what has ever since been known as one of the Forty-Niners. His exploits there were many and on one occasion he attempted to secure a Spanish claim, like unto J. C. Fremont, and wrote home at one time that he expected to succeed in his undertaking but the fates were against him and he finally came home no richer than he went. He was seven months going

to California but with railroad facilities, he returned in the short space of seven days.

When moving away from the old homestead, my mother hired a tenement of her brother-in-law, Leonard Taft, where she made it her home for several years afterwards. She had always known what it was to work and now that she was free to go where she pleased, she began to work out for other folks at whatever she could find to do. She was a good nurse and often had calls in cases of sickness and childbirth, and I have known her to go where children were born and take not only care of both child and mother but do all the housework - washing and all - doing all this for the sum of three dollars per week, a price that shrunks into insignificance beside the prices of today.

With the spring and fall terms of school in the old Seventh School District completed, and after working for Linus every day but holidays til winter, I then began to go to school daytimes and after getting home at night to work evenings. As I remember it, a master by the name of Samuel Thayer taught the school. With the loss of the two previous terms and the advance to those who had attended, I found myself very much in the background and greatly discouraged in regard to making any effort towards catching up with others of my age and size. My backwardness I think put me in an unfavorable position with the teacher for I can't remember that he ever took any interest in the way of helping me out of my difficulty and thus as I recall it I became the blockhead of the school throughout this term, the result being that I finally came to the conclusion that my capacity for learning was not good enough to warrant any further effort in that direction. I recall no special incidents during this time of school except that I skated a great deal on the pond opposite the schoolhouse and often went up to the Enos Alby shop to beg skate strings, which the workmen were most always kind enough to give the boys. I was a good skater and could keep in touch with most boys my age, and thus I was more interested in skates than in books.

THINGS I REMEMBER

About the time of the close of the winter school, my year was ompleted with Linus, and again I let out to him for a yeas, as before, except that I was to have fifty-five dollars instead of thirty dollars and was not to work evenings when I went to school. Linus did not take kindly to this last arrangement but as I greatly rebelled against evening work after school, and my mother didn't interfere, I was master of the situation. This was a broken year and I failed to carry out the contract. I was now fourteen and being large of my age I began to feel that I was "some punkins". Linus decided to build a new house this spring, on his father's farm, and while it was being built he moved into the house with his father. Measles were very prevalent in the neighborhood and about old "Lection" time I began to show symptoms of the disease. My mother still lived in the Leonard Taft tenement and I was obliged to go home til I could get better, which was quite a number of weeks. I wasn't very sick and for this reason it was hard to keep me in the house, and with my roaming about in all kinds of weather I took a cold which sent what breaking-out I had back into my system. I recovered, however, enough to go back to work and when getting back to the Staples' house I well remember my great surprise to see that a youngster of very small age had taken my place. There was room for both, however, and I again took up my line of work. I was not in working order much of the time all summer but remained with Linus and did what I could.

This was the fall of 1848, a time when Mendon had a general scourge of sickness. About the first of September I was taken down with a fever and had to take to my bed, or rather a bed was made up for me in one of the living rooms, where I could be better cared for. There was a ? doctor in Milford by the name of Scammell and as he was the family physician in the Staples family, he was called to my case. He pronounced it fever and from the way he talked and

the others acted, I was led to conclude that my case was critical to say the least. Linus' father, Abram, used to visit me often and after looking at my tongue and feeling of my pulse would very indiscreetly remark that I was not quite so well, which, though possibly a fact, was not encouraging. My mother was out nursing at the time with a young woman by the name of Caroline Taft, a daughter of Widow Hanson ~~or Alanson~~ Taft. The young lady being so very sick and not expected to live, my mother didn't feel it her duty to leave her at once but as she soon died I was soon made glad by my mother's presence. Linus' house was a cottage and, with other help which he boarded, there was a shortage of room for a sick boy and a nurse. After a day or two it was concluded by Doctor Scammell that it would be safe to remove me to the home of my mother and accordingly this was done, and I now well remember many circumstances connected with this removal. Not everyone in those days felt to afford a family carriage and Arnold Taft was the only man in the neighborhood who had one, so far as I remember. Like his family, his carriage was a very large one, and although he was not much of a moving man and used the carriage but little, it was often on the go in the hands of his neighbors. It was a bright sunny September morning and, with the Taft carriage at the door, I in some manner not now recalled reached and got onto the seat. Whether I was in an upright or reclining position, I do not recollect but I do remember that it was a beautiful morning and that I had a delightful ride in the then greatest of a turnout.

In going to my mother's home we had to pass through the village of Mendon, and on entering the village I remember the road was lined with children returning home from school - dinner pails and books in hand. This being out of the ordinary, inquiry was soon made as to the cause of their return, when we were astounded to learn that the Honorable C. P. Hastings had the night before fell in a fit in

the postoffice, from which he soon died; and as Miss Minnie Allen, who taught the school, was a sister of Mr. Hastings' wife, the NO SCHOOL order was quickly understood. I was not old enough and well acquainted with the parties to have much conception of the cause of Mr. Hastings' death but in after years it was learned that it was after a long and heated debate between Mr. Hastings and others present that he dropped to the floor, to never recover consciousness again. My trip home in the Taft carriage was continued, however, and with only about two miles farther to go the journey was soon completed.

I was glad to get to the home of my mother and where I could have a bed that wasn't on the floor to lie in. I was on the mend when getting home and before many days I remember that Doctor Scammell said that I seemed to be getting along all right but that there was some symptoms about me he was unable to acdount for. Not many hours after he had gone, however, my mother discovered that I was thickly broken out with measles and as mother was used to this disease she soon began to administer the proper treatment. I do not recall what the treatment was but I am sure there were no sheep or ? on the premises. After this recovery I was much improved in my general health and although I didn't work any more for Linus on my yearly contract, I went back to work for him by the month.

My first attempt at smoking was this fall and if I should live as long as did Methuselah, I should never forget my exprience. Nahor Staples above referred to was probably about eighteen years old and was working for Linus at that time at closing boots, and like many other young men had become a smoker of a TD pipe; and to have a little fun he filled a new TD with fine-cut tobacco, realizing, I doubt not, that with a new pipe I would be more likely to continue smoking than if he gave me an old strong pipe. I had a good smoke, however, and I remember how free and easy the smoke came out of the pipe into my mouth and how grand I felt to be able to send forth a cloud of smoke across

the room like an old smoker. The gradeur soon began to wane, however, for I discovered I didn't feel just right at the stomach, and dropping my pipe I made quick steps for the door, out of which I went at a lively gait; and no sooner did I inhale the out-of-doors air than the contents of my stodmach were seeking the open. This was a remarkable change in both my mental and physical condition, for I not only had an awful feeling in my stomach but was terribly chagrined at being so fooled; but thinking to make the best of it, I hurried round the house at quick speed, making a deposit at every step, and slipped into the woodhouse very slying as though nothing was troubling me; but to my great dismay I discovered that Mr. Nahor had followed my every step and with a tremendously satisfied grin on his face stood looking into the door of the woodhouse at me. I could have thrown a stick of wood at him with good relish but I remember that I, in great soberness, picked up my handful of wood and carried it into the house, where I took a bee-line out of the house and crept into the back part of a wagon out in the barn, where for several hours afterwards I was a quiet stayer. Nahor's pipe and Nahor's laughter I shall never forget.

I don't quite recall whether I worked all winter for Linus or whether I went to school but think I went to work for Enos Albee and attended school from there to some extent. At any rate, I remember that I was back to work for Linus the next spring, where I worked during the summer. Linus had now built quite a nice large shop to work in and, besides having help of his own, let shop room to different ones who put the bottoms onto boots after they were closed together. Among those who worked there that summer (1849) were Linus Staples, Nahor Staples, and writer - at closing boots; and David Paine, Nicholas Paine, and Putnam Paine, who were bottomers of boots; and withall good musicians. David was not much of a player on the violin

but understood music and could prompt for dancing and play second violin. Nicholas, however, though not a reader of music, was an extraordinary good fiddler, and together they went far and near to play for all-night dances. David was also a teacher of dancing and altogether he spent much time in the direction of music and dancing. Putt Paine, as we always called him, was not a player of any kind of instrument but with a roll of paper at his mouth, or a piece of leather which he sometimes used, he could imitate a bass horn in a manner that would be hard to detect from the real instrument by any one in an adjoining room.

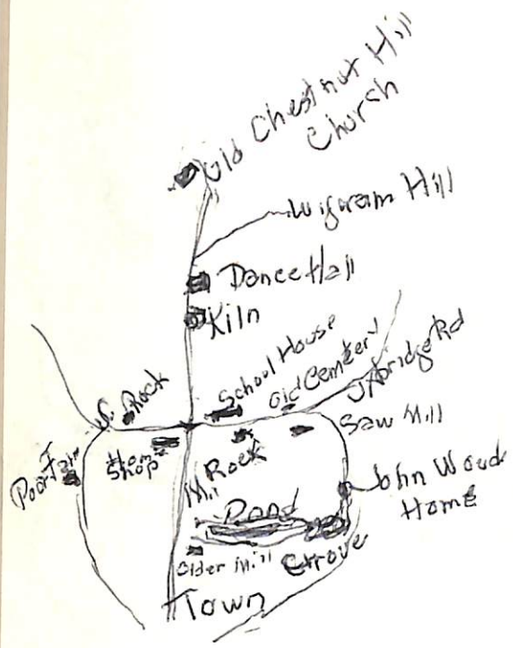
It was this fall that Nahor Staples took it into his head to quit boots and obtain an education. He had neglected school to some extent so far but, with his brother Carleton forging ahead and preparing for the Meadville Seminary school, he all-of-a-sudden and to the surprise of his shopmates proclaimed his intention to seek an education. This was so greatly in contrast with his previous tendencies that the neighborhood was disposed to side ~~out~~ with his movement.

Marcus M. Aldrich 1834-1914

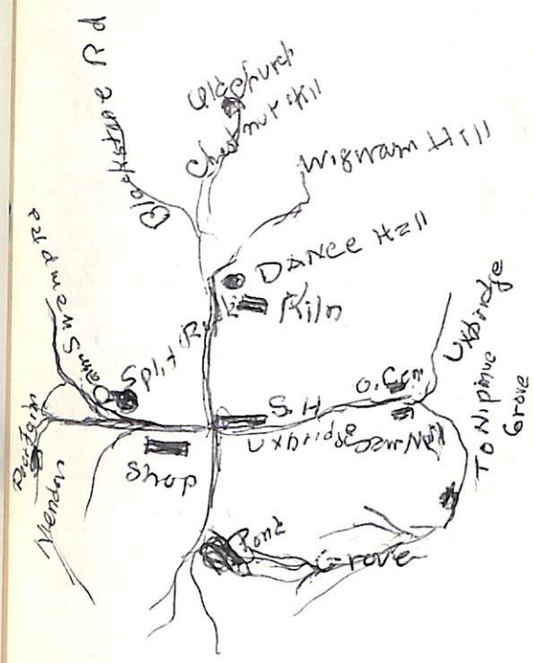
notations: FJA 1969
EJC 1977

Further notes on Albeeville
from a correspondence between
Florence J. Aldrich of Mendon
and Bertha Albee S. Gaskill of
Auburn, Mass. who once lived in
Albeeville

Letters date from 1967 - 1970



a map of Albeeville, as Bertha Albee Gaskill remembered it ~ sent to FSA in 1967


Blackstone Rd
Old Church
Chestnut Hill
Wigwam Hill
Dance Hall
Kiln
Split Rock
Dam Swamp Rd
Uxbridge
S.H
O.Com
Uxbridge
Shop
Pond
Grove
To Nipinue Grove

From
Mrs. Bertha F. Allen
(Spaulding) Haskell of
Auburn, Mass.
1967
born and brought up in the
Allenville section (the Earl
Wagner 1967 house), of which she
sent a picture - showing the
Allen tool shop also.

Albeeville OLD BRICK SCHOOLHOUSE

This was later Horace Randall's house, across
the old Freeman Farm (now Hickmott's; Randall was
ail-carrier during my youth; when Aunt Grace Lowell
d up there, I think; the old road from Lowell St.*
to come up thru between Aunt Grace's and what is
Joe Randor's home, and across the street by the
Brick school and on thru woods or pastures out on
leasant Street; I think the "4-Corners" just beyond
ade in later years (as it is now) perhaps when the
t wooden schoolhouse was built on one of those
ners; Mrs. Freeman (Lillian's family) lived on one
er when she was born; that is Lillian; Bertha
e(Gaskill) on another, the schoolhouse; 4th one,
t know.

*Lovell St.

~1970

Notes from Bertha Albee S. Gaskill in April 1967

The Albeeville Schoolhousewas built in the late 1860s or somewhat before. I attended when I was 4 years old; Frank Heywood, relative of Mrs. Caroline Freeman ~~(with whom he lived)~~ was ~~the~~ my teacher ~~in 1877~~; after then ~~from 1877 to~~ until 1886, when I went into high school; ~~Frank Heywood~~; William Taft - ~~both of~~ Albeeville; Cora Gaskill of Mendon Center, later Mrs. Melvin Burr, Nina's mother); Annie Aldrich of Mendon; and Harriet Freeman of Albeeville (Lillian White's mother). In high school; 1886-1890. John Quincy Heywood; Hill Williams; Wendell Williams (brothers) of Mrs. Herbert George; and F. L. Pattee; Mrs. Gaskill graduated in 1890. School superintendents were G. B. Williams (father of the above Williams boys - and incidentally the instigator of a high school in the town. Edward Dixon (brother-in-law of Frank M. Aldrich); Rosa George, a daughter of N. Richard George and sister of Mr. Herbert G; afterwards Mrs. Arthur Taft of Uxbridge, who provided our present library; and Lyman Cook, of the South Milford district.

Mrs. Gaskill taught 2 years at the Albeeville District School (Mendon's 7th District) - 1890-1; 1891-2; she was also the janitor - schoolhouse diagonally across the corner of the Crossroads from her home. Mrs. Freeman, while teaching there, lived on the corner opposite Miss Albee.

My grandfather Aldrich speaks of the "old brick" first, then a new wood one - look up - this may be the third and last. It was the Seventh District of Mendon.

~~The house opposite present Randon home~~

The brick house on right (Mendon to Chestnut Hill) ~~was~~ is part of the "old" brick - with additions just beyond present Hickmott.

A-1967

Family Facts from April 1967 letter

Adin Ballou, then the Unitarian minister at Hopedale, performed the marriage ceremony of my parents, Charles Henry Albee and Eliza Ann Robinson, in the parlor of the Albeeville residence, June 21, 1868.

My parents and grandparents were Unitarians; Adin Ballou frequently visited at my home in Albeeville when I was a child. My mother was active in the ladies aid of the Unitarian church in Mendon; she frequently entertained them at our home; various pastors also often visited with us.

We were members of the Grange; I held various offices.

My father served in the Civil War. Both he and my mother had pensions.
My father was an Odd Fellow.

continue with sheet 1

- - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Enos T. Albee married Deborah Nichols of Smithfield, R.I. on March 23, 1837 in Mendon. Their son, Charles Henry Albee, was born in Mendon on Jan. 20, 1845. Enos and Deborah are buried in small cemetery on Pleasant Street, Mendon.

xcerpts from Letter of November 1967 Bertha Albee (S) Gaskill
(when 94 or 95 years?

he Austin Fletcher I had in mind was a neighbor of my grandfather
he lived in first house on left going toward Mendon. It was part
rick - undoubtedly from the kiln at Waterman Taft's Place, as I knew it.
rnold Taft was the first owner.

his Austin Fletcher had a son Barclay and a daughter Eliza. Barclay
nd my father must have grown up together. Later Austin moved to Franklin.
e and Hariette, his wife, kept a boarding-house, at which the students
f Dean Academy boarded; they had other boarders too. My mother, from
est Parish, Maine, boarded with the Fletcher's when she came to Massa-
usetts to work in the straw shop there. Evidently my father visited
he Fletcher home as a close friend of Barcley; also to "court" my
other, Eliza E. Robinson (no relative of those around here): father
ad known Eliza at W. Pariswhere he attended an Academy.

arclay and Eliza Fletcher attended my parentsat their wedding in the
arlor of the new section of our Albeeville home, built for the occasion.
myself visited in Franklin when about 8 years old. At that time Mr. &
rs. Fletcher had acquired a beautiful three-story mansion just adjoining
e large cemetery there; to me it was a grand home, equal to any of
that period. Auntie Fletcher, as I called her, named my sister after
erself - Hariette. Auntie died when Hattie was 5 years old. of blood-
oisoning caused from a cat bite.

arclay became a prosperous lawyer in New York. At his death he was
very wealthy man; left a fortune among his and his wife's relatives.
large gift to Harvard, his alma mater.

s a child, my home was open to many relatives, and with the men
oarders from the boot shop, our family was large. Both grandfather
lbee and Grandmother Robinson were part of the household. When I was
0 grandfather met with reverses in business and money became tight;
here was a mortgage on the place, and foreclosure followed when I
was about 17. It was very hard on my father; he was a proud man. An Odd Fel
took high degrees, going to Boston for installations. At time of his
death was a Grand master of IOOF; had been installing all through
the country just previously - in 1906.

A-1967

rtha Albee S. Gaskill Letter of March 14, 1968
rs. Bertha S. Gaskill
2 Oxford Street
burn, Mass.
501

nie Parkinson (Scriven) was one of my closest friends. I first ate
acon at her home when spending the night with her, on the back road
om North End to Hopedale; her mother, a small, crippled English woman,
oiled it, sputtering, on a wire broiler over the hot coals thr u the
ont of the kitchen range - you recall the let-down drop at front of
e old-fashioned stove! -----The slive of bacon was held on a long
tal fork, I now recall - instead of the wire broiler. It was served
ly slightly cooked, dripping with hot fat, on toast. I recall I
ved the odor of bacon!

range - my parents killed a hog every Fall but the pork was salted
d used for baked beansmany other foods. The back quarters of leg were
nt away to be smoked; the fore quarters pickled in sweet brine; mother
ways boiled the clippings or drippins until water gone and we ate the
own residue on toast. She made head cheese, or, as we called it,
ouse meat" of better cuttings (should the word above be cuttings?)
is was cooked and squeezed in a large sieve until all fat removed.
is was excellent on winter mornings; it was just browned in buttered
ider or eaten cold with pepper and salt, and vinegar. The hocks and feet,
es and all,were scalded and carefully scraped, then pickled in vinegar
ine - were they good! the very lower part of the leg (hocks) were
ten salted in sweetened brine and used with corn beef.

ther also butchered a calf yearly;the head parts were always a ritual
th my mother and Hat Freeman, who lived opposite until I was 12 years old.
t and I were chums although I was a pupil and she a teacher. Mrs. Freeman
s my teacher in what would now be 7th and 8th grades; fitted me for
gh school. She was one fine teacher.

am trying to recall Waldo Thayer's place. The Thayers I knew were
izer Thayer, who lived on a back road running running from the Wigwam
ll road over hilltops, coming out onto the back road from Albeeville
Uxbridge.

you know Agawam Street* or Avenue? It runs off the Albeeville road
Uxbridge, at left, just before Robinson's farm. They came from
ston in the 80's, locating on the old road at right, just beyond your
andfather(s - off road to left. They were monied people; lived
irst house at R on that back road. Later bought the Samuel Taft
arm, where they established a milk route.

m Taft was husband to Waity Wood Taft - Mrs. Freeman's Wood sister.
ey had all sons - William, Samuel, Fred, and Silas. Went to Uxbridge
rly 1890s - Silas graduated in '88 and may have gone soon after.

ck to Agawam Street: A Mr. and Mrs. Swenson, teachers in Beverly, bought
lace, or land, and a home, or remodeled some, 7 years ago. They plan to
tire to this place My grandfather's grave is in the cemetery just
low the Robinson farm.

anson Freeman's wife lived at the first house on that road when
Asylum Street in Mendon?

Bertga S Gaskeill3-14-68

was a girl - Dora. Alanson was Lillian White's uncle. He was the
ast Freeman to farm on the Albeeville farm; Aunt Caroline lived on there
ome years alone. Then went to live with her daughter Alice Lowell in
onedale. Later Lucius Lowell went to live in Mrs. Bartlett's house in
endon

o you recollect the Cunningham family who lived on the old Mendon road,
irst house on left from schoolhouse? They were Irish, poor whites,
nd Mrs. C was a character. There were 3 girls - Louisa, Alice, and Lu cy; ad
nd Clinton; Clinton attended one year at high school. He wanted to
tudy French; it was not taught then.

FJA-1968

/

ERPTS FROM LETTER OF BERTHA ALBEE (SPAULDING) GASKILL
in auburn, massachusetts, September 1968

never knew that the brick house had previously been the schooljouse;
had known that my "Austin Fletcher" owned it. In my childhood a large
om was added as parlor; also a veranda. Mary Kinsley lived there before
e married Bill Daley, then moving to Town, to the house once Doctor
tcalf's, I think.

ter Morris lived opposite Mercy Ross and family when I was a child.

nt Deborah lived opposite.

roline Freeman beyond.

lian White's parents lived opposite my home until I went to high school.
. Freeman taught the Albeeville School several years. She was my
cher; then they moved to Town about 1886-7.

other neighbors were the Richardsons, who lived a short distance beyond
schoolhouse, toward Chestnut Hill.

a and Dora Taft lived some distance beyond.

al Williams, and Myra and Dora Ina Taft not far beyond.

Southwicksbeyond, under the hill, near the claypits.

old road into your people's place was some distance (left, in through
woods; the turn to Wigwam Hill was just beyond on right.

the road to Uxbridge there were the Thayers, Woods, and Samuel H. Taft.

the old road to Mendon and Dam Swamp lived the Cunningham's, Clarks,
3 families of Stapleses. The "Old Maids" lived far in first pasture
d from the Four-Corners.

1-1968

NOTES ON MENDON FOLK
FROM BERTHA ABBEE S. GASKILL
FORMERLY OF ALBEEVILLE, NOW AUBURN, MASS.
MAY 15, 1970

e knew the "Towne's" house* well since a small girl; her parents and
. and Mrs. Nathan Towne were close friends; she and Nate about of an
e, and her brother Fred about the same. Mr. Towne worked as a delivery
n for Henry Aldrich, who ran the corner grocery store and postoffice.*2
en he delivered in Albeeville, he usually ate dinner with the Albee family.

knew theKinsleys, next door to Towne's;*3 Percy about her brother's age.

e does not remember Sullivan Taft. Waterman Taft lived on the knoll
ve the Southwick Hall (Lamothe-Bartlett in 1970); his aged mother lived
the upper section of their big house; his father was dead. Ina and Myra
e Waterman's children; their mother a member of the Unitarian church
ing circle (Alliance). Her mother and "Hat" Freeman also belonged.
recalls two occasions when her mother and Mrs. Waterman Taft enter-
ned the Sewing Circle, serving a real "banquet" tea.

and Mrs. James Taft, parents of Dora and Cora, lived about half-way
ween Waterman's and my home (where Fern Wagner lives in 1970). Mrs.
es also belonged to Unitarian. The Circle used to give wonderful suppers
n in Town Hall.

uel Taft and wife, parents of William, Samuel, and ? Silas, lived on the
d to Uxbridge from Albeeville; the mother was Waty Wood. Samuel was
armer, with large herd of cattle; also a saw-mill at foot of the hill
osite the little old cemetery. My grandparents, Enos and Deborah Albee,
buried there. We cared for it for many years; there are small markers
re; now overgrown with poison ivy. Pleasant St.

remember Alanson Freeman, who lived to be nearly 100; his mother Caroline
she made her home then with her daughter Alice (Lowell) - Freem and
th's parents. Now I'm 96, that seems ages ago; when I was about 14, I
ped Alice Lowell with baby Walter, the younger brother, when they had
ed from Albeeville to Mrs. Bartlett's house down in the center of Mendon
le Street - 2-apartment house owned by Carlton Goss in 1970).
rn Street

* Danny's Variety 1970
1 across from Unitarian church, painted brown 1970
2 next to Towne's, large white house - Viola Barnes 1970

Bertha Albee lived where Carl and Fern Wagner lived in 1970

1 June 1970
2 June 1977

April 1967 Compiled from letters from Bertha Albee Gaskill to Florence J. Aldrich by FJA

She wonders if anybody in the Aldrich Family ever worked for her grandfather, Enos Albee, in his boot shop in Albeeville - in rear of the yard of Fern Wagner's house now). Yes, my grandfather, Marcus Aldrich did for ashort time when he was learning the trade and lived on the little farm now owned by Mr. Armstrong, the pump man, off Millville Road. This was grandfather's birthplace and home until he was about 15; it was "way off at the end of the road."

She mentions vivid recollections of Adin Ballou, when he was minister at Mendon, and her grandfather Albee as they frequently sat on the front piazza thru the summer afternoons.

One of her great pleasures when a young girl was taking books from the Mendon Library (the present historical museum). "I had to walk the 2-1/2 miles and I used to get books on several cards so as not to have to make the trip too often." "I always went to Sunday School; frequently father would let me drive, and I'd use the sheds at the side of the church (left)." For a long time Mr. G. B. Williams was Sunday School superintendent (Mrs. Herbert George's father-when they lived at Clayton Parkinson's) Evidently he was a Congregationalist, as our lesson books were from that denomination; I feel certain this continued for a long time; at length there was a regular pastor-Unitarian; he saw to it that our lesson books were changed (FJA-I think this was Rev. L. G. Wilson). to his faith. I recollect that my mother and mrs. Liberty Freeman were pleased as they were active in the women's association.

"I recollect one occasion when my mother entertained the Group. She served lemon meringue pie for supper. I imagine I had a piece for my supper, but it must have tasted good for I stole into the pantry and helped myself to more. I also recall that I was one sick girl - it was too rich for my stomach."

I can also remember when Mrs. Waterman Taft (up at the big brick house of now 1960s Smothe's) entertained the church Group. The home was most unusual; the kitchen - dining-room was in a lower part of the house; the living room in the second floor, and chambers on the upper floor; as you know, it was a fine home."(FJA-My grandfather Aldrich gives a quite complete description of this home in a paper he wrote called Things I Remember - he spent many boyhood days in that home.)"Aunt ??somebody occupied a back section level with the living room; the new part of the house was built into the side of the hill; one could walk out a side door in the living room onto garden and vineyard. This was most romantic to me as a child. The new part was of brick; I wonder if they were made in the kiln just across the road, between the large barn and Southwick's Hall (FJA-Yes, always heard so). The old "clay pit" was apond when I was a child, and we often caught frogs there.

The "Old Maids", Mary and Olive Howard, lived in a very, very old weather - stained house (two rooms) located far off from any other person (FJA- on the road southward just beyond Fern Wagner's house) They hadn't much idea of cleanliness in the one room where they cooked and slept; always had several cats that roamed at will,* we

At one time they had a cow, hens, and turkeys. Children loved to visit them and find a chance to do some mischief; guess the boys gave them much trouble. Liberty Freeman was selectman at the time they got too old and helpless to live alone. He had to put them in

*This was deleted by FJA for some reason - EJC 1977

the poorhouse, which had, a short time previous, been turned over to Davis Hill (the Morrison House on Providence Road now). We were very sorry for them; over the hill to the poor farm was a sad happening at that time! The large "Cleft Rock" was located at the Old Maid's Place (often spoken of in Albeeville lore- ask Fern Wagner if she has seen this).

Charles Staples, then a young Unitarian minister, bought the property that adjoined the Henry Staples Place on the Dam Swamp Road (Blackstone Street).

Little Pond was a "bug-a-boo" to me as a child (FJA-this was close by my Grandfather Aldrich's home- when I was little he still owned it and raked cranberries off the meadow there) It had no bottom, according to the boys.

June 1967 letter: Little Pond

It was a place to scare us children. The boys used to venture there to fish. It was located ~~deep in the swamp~~ in a deep swamp. The land about was so very soggy that it did "bend doughnuts" - teeter up and down. The boys claimed it had no bottom as no length of drop line ever hit bottom. I was never allowed to accompany them when they ventured to explore. However, I did go near the pond when a grown girl, as my father pastured young heifers in the adjoining pasture. The swamp was filled with blueberry bushes - I picked them to sell. (FJA-Think Gramp tells of some dog getting mired in Little Pond, in his Things I Remember.)

Inman Hill

was an interesting section. The road went over the hill from the back road to Mendon, to the Dam Swamp Road, to Cumberland Hill. I recall this as I know that my Grandmother Albee came from that section. There was a wonderful farm at the Mendon end, at the top of the hill. The only other house was said to be haunted. It was very, very old and none of the boys in Albeeville ever ventured there, that I knew of. I occasionally rode over the hill road, by the "haunted" house with my grandfather; we turned a woodlot on the lower part of the hill at Dam Swamp. Morrison Staples' large farmhouse was located near the entrance to the wood lot; Henry Staples' farm was ashort distance toward Albeeville. There were but three other houses on that short stretch of road. A family by the name of Clark lived at the ?????she didn't say where

ALBEEVILLE

In a letter to FJA by Bertha Albee S.G. in April 1967:

At the further end of Albeeville toward Chestnut Hill was the last house in the Village. In 1870 I recall the home, owned by the Southwick's was burned - the only house burned while I lived there. The Southwick's rebuilt a large two-story rectangular building. The upper story was used as a Dance Hall; country dances were frequently held there (FJA-My Dad and "BuB" Cromb, Carrie Ellison's Dad used to go to them Saturday nights when Mr. Cromb lived on North Avenue, corner of Northbridge Road, where Mr. Solomon Smith does now.) Steve Legg of Chestnut Hill or Henry Brown (FJA-the Benotti home on Millville Road) of Mendon were skilled fiddlers and prompters; oyster stews were served in a long room on the first floor at intermission. 1978 - foundation of old dance hall visible near residence of Adam Lamothe on Millville Street.

The Waterman Taft home (Lamothe's) partially of red brick, with very large weather-boarded barn on opposite side of the road, was but a short distance toward Mendon Center, on a steep rise from Southwick's. Situated in a bog below was an old brick kiln. Waterman was a farmer; his elderly mother and aunt lived in an older wooden part of the house. This was a remarkable place to visit as the large kitchen was in the basement and the living room was on the second floor where a door opened onto a grape vineyard. Chambers were on a third floor, on level with old section of the building. Both Myra and Ina (Waterman's daughters)FJA-Ina was later Mrs. French of Mendon Center, Hopedale, and Grafton; Myra lived in Boston for years; her father moved down on Main Street, in the small house demolished recently) went to high school.

A short distance toward Town was a spooky cemetery (family) with vault or tomb.

Just beyond, at right, was a good-sized white house, well built, withgreen blinds. Its occupants were unknown to me - and a mystery to young people. The place is well kept, with laid-out gardens. (FJA-Lorna Rhodes' father-in-law, isn't it.)

In a rise of land a short distance beyond was the Williams home, standing dark and lonely. Roy Williams attended high school. Mr. Williams was a skilled carpenter; hesmet his death by a fall while working on a roof at the north end of Mendon.

Just beyond, on same side, was the well-built house owned by a Staples.

The James Taft home, with large barn just about opposite, was the home of Cora, Mason, and Cora Taft. (FJA-All Mendon High pupils.

A small Boot and Shoe shop opposite the Taft house was later made into a dwelling. All about this section were cattle pastures and blueberry swamps.

Some distance on up and down hill was the Richardson Place, at left. Mark Richardson was a well-built, fine-appearing man and at one time State representative; his sons, Grove(lon) and Norman went West. His other children were Mabel, May, and Harry - they may have attended high schod; all but Harry were older than I. Mabel married well and lived in Worcester; Harry located in Woonsocket, R. I. (FJA-Grove R married - My Rood)

Beyond, on same side, was the Albeeville Schoolhouse, set back from the road surrounded by large spreading elms. Here were the "Cross Roads". Mendon to Chestnut Hill; road to Uxbridge; road to Dam Swamp (toward Blackstone); also an old road to Mendon.

Albeeville - 2

Up a steep rise, at left, lived Liberty Freeman, long-time selectman and Town milkman. Mrs. Harriet, his wife, was a Mendon High graduate and taught the Albeeville school several times. Frank Freeman, their eldest son, became a lawyer, and was made a judge. He graduated from M.H.S. in 1887. Other children were Clair and Lillian.

At the right, opposite, was the Charles Henry Albee home; and boot and shoe shop.* Bertha and Fred attended M.H.S., Bertha graduating in 1890. Fred left during his last year. *Wagner, Carl + Fern

The Caroline Freeman children all attended M.H.S; Her home was just beyond my home (Hickmotts now); the children all much older than myself; Liberty, Alice, Flora, and Alanson (Lillian White's father; ~~Akkee~~ Edith Lowell's mother; Freeman Messenger's mother; and "Lance" Freeman who used to live where Twitchells do) Frank Heywood (later of Southboro) lived with Mrs. Caroline and her family. *Maple Street

Peter Morris' home was near.; on the left; the two older, Mary and Ann, very likely attended high school. Jon and James, younger, did.

Other Albeeville children atttending M.H.S were William, Samuel, Fred, and Silas Taft, sons of Samuel Taft who lived on the road to Uxbridge.* Silas was in the class of 1888, first class to have a public graduation (FJA-believe this was given at thehigh school - not real formal). Samuel Taft had a large farm and ran a sawmill with water-wheel power. The site was opposite the old cemetery on the same road. * Pleasant St. probably and Park St

From an April 1967 letter

Persons of Interest in Albeeville

Mark Richardson, state representative.
Wm. Taft, son of Samuel, a lawyer
Samuel Taft ran the sawmill
Liberty Freeman - selectman and overseer of the poor.
Charles H. Albee and Enos Taft Albee - manufacturers boots + shoes
Charles Staples, son of Henry; Unitarian minister.
Frank Heywood - teacher
Harriet(Wood)Freeman; William Taft; Dora Taft; Bertha Albee - Teachers

Places of Interest

Old Clay Pits; Schoolhouse; Poor Farm - Old Mendon Road; Mile Rock -
Uxbridge Road; Old Cemetery grounds; Sawmill; Boot Shop; Cleft Rock-
near Olive and Mary Howard home; Chestnut groves; Arbutus and Laurel;
Cranberry bogs; Blueberry swamps; Wigwam Hill; Nipmuck or Mendon Pond;
The Southwick Dance Hall;

Mendon High School Alumni Reunion, Mendon Town Hall, 1951

Left, Bertha Albee Gaskill
Class of ~~1888~~ 1890

Center, Newton Nutter
Class of ~~1888~~ 1890

Right, Grace Taft Lowell
Class of 1889

Given to Mendon Historical Society in 1980 by Martha Lowell of Mendon, daughter of Grace.